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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention
of Discrimination and
Protection of Minorities
Forty-third session
Agenda item 16

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Written statement submitted by Zonta International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category I), International Council of Jewish Women, International Council on Jewish Social and Welfare Services and International Federation of University Women, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[13 August 1991]

1. The above-mentioned organizations welcome the initiative made at the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery with regard to the validity of reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This is a matter that has been of concern to women's organizations for some time.

2. At the meeting of 10 April 1987 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a draft general recommendation was adopted:

"Upon examination of reports from States parties, at its sessions the Committee expressed concern in relation to the significant number of reservations which appear to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The Committee welcomes the decision of the States parties to consider reservations at their next meeting in New York in 1988, and to this end suggests that all States parties concerned reconsider such reservations with a view to withdrawing them."

3. Very many reservations have been made on certain articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. These concern equality and discrimination; employment; legal equality; freedom of movement and domicile; and status in marriage. These matters stand at the heart of the problem of discrimination.

4. The above-mentioned organizations request the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to support the proposal that the matter of validity of reservations to the Convention should be referred through appropriate channels to the International Court of Justice for an opinion.

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